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EARLY PRINTING IN THE MIDDLE COLONIES.

ADDRESS DELIVERED BEFORE THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA, DECEMBER 11, 1885, TO COMMEMORATE THE
TWO HUNDREDTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE INTRO-
DUCTION OF PRINTING INTO THE MIDDLE
COLONIES OF NORTH AMERICA.

BY GEORGE DANA BOARDMAN, D.D.

MR. PRESIDENT, MEMBERS OF THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN :

Francis Bacon, treating of History in his immortal "De Augmentis," compares antiquities, or remnants of histories, to the spars of a shipwreck, when, though the memory of things be decayed and almost lost, yet industrious and sagacious persons, by a certain pertinacious and scrupulous diligence, out of genealogies, calendars, titles, monuments, coins, proper names and styles, etymologies of words, proverbs, traditions, archives, and instruments, as well public as private, fragments of histories scattered about in books not historical, do, I say, from all these things, or some of them, rescue and conserve somewhat from the deluge of time.¹

These words of the great philosopher happily describe, at least in part, the functions of such institutions as the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. They serve as the collectors and museums of "shipwrecked spars," scattered archives,

¹ "Antiquitates, seu historiarum reliquæ, sunt tanquam tabulæ naufragii; cum deficiente et fere submersa rerum memoria, nihilominus homines industrii et sagaces, pertinaci quadam et scrupulosa diligentia, ex genealogiis, fastis, titulis, monumentis, numismatibus, nominibus propriis et stilis, verborum etymologiis, proverbiiis, traditionibus, archivis et instrumentis tam publicis quam privatis, historiarum fragmentis librorum neutiquam historicorum locis dispersis; ex his inquam omnibus, vel aliquibus, nonnulla a temporis diluvio eripiunt et conservant."
—*De Augmentis Scientiarum, liber secundus, caput vi.*

historic relics, and the like. And in thus garnering the past they do an immense service. For, as the future is rooted in the present, so the present is rooted in the past. Just because the past is our sire, the past often speaks to us as a venerable and authoritative oracle. We love to talk of "the logic of events,"—the phrase is as profound as it is frequent,—but events have their logic because the logic itself is often largely genealogical. The experiments—that is to say, the experiences—of our fathers have come down to us crystallized into formulas. What they worked out into maxims we inherit as axioms. All honor, then, to our Historical Societies, for they are in an eminent sense conservators of a mighty past.

And in thus conserving the mighty past our mightiest helper is the art of printing. For, to use the powerful imagery of Thomas Carlyle, "this noble art is like an infinitely intensified organ of Speech, whereby the Voice of a small transitory man may reach not only through all earthly Space, but through all earthly Time."¹ Or, more briefly, the art of printing is "the art conservative of arts." Most fitting, then, it is that the Historical Society of Pennsylvania should seize the two hundredth anniversary of the Introduction of the Art of Printing into the Middle Colonies of North America as an occasion for formal and enthusiastic commemoration. My only regret is that he whom you have so courteously selected to be your orator this evening is so little worthy of the honorable distinction you have generously conferred on him. Nor would he have presumed to accept the honor had he not remembered that, by the "logic of events" to which he has adverted, he is genealogically connected with our past, being permitted to serve a church which was founded in 1698,—a church which has had among her illustrious ministers the Reverend Ebenezer Kinnersley, an intimate associate of Benjamin Franklin in his scientific discoveries, and whose worth is commemorated in a memorial window in the University of Pennsylvania; a church which has had among

¹ Carlyle's "Critical and Miscellaneous Essays," Vol. II. page 399.

her illustrious pastors the Reverend Morgan Edwards, the prime mover in founding Rhode Island College in 1764, and the Reverend Doctor William Rogers, a Brigade Chaplain in the Continental Army of the Revolution, and for twenty-two years professor of Oratory and Belles-lettres in the University just mentioned; a church which has had among her illustrious laymen the Honorable John Holme, who, sitting as one of the judges at the famous trials of George Keith and William Bradford for issuing libellous and seditious papers, and dissenting from his brethren on the bench, was the first here to maintain judicially the momentous doctrine of the Freedom of the Press. And yet, notwithstanding this honorable historic ancestry, I cannot hope to be able, Gentlemen of the Historical Society, to add a single item to your erudition, for you live in a historic atmosphere, where every detail of biography and chronology and topography is, so to speak, a familiar. For me, then, to attempt in this presence historic information would be as doltish as to attempt to teach Minerva, or to illumine the sunbeam. All that I may venture to undertake is to recall to your memory some of the salient points suggested by the significant event we are gathered to commemorate. But before undertaking to do this it will be needful for me to say a few words about our first printers, our first books, our first magazines, and our first newspapers. Let me gratefully add that for the details of this part of my address I am indebted to the kind hints of our indefatigable librarian, Mr. Frederick D. Stone.

It is true that the art of printing was introduced into the New World, at the City of Mexico, as early as 1536. But to William Bradford belongs the honor of introducing the art into the Middle Colonies of British America. Excepting, indeed, a feeble and transient introduction into Virginia in 1682, he was the first to follow his calling on the American continent south of Massachusetts and north of Mexico. Distinguished as Bradford's service was, it is not needful that I go into detailed particulars of his life, his character, or his work; for these have been fully and with

rare grace set forth by our late accomplished President, Mr. John William Wallace, in his Commemorative Address before the New York Historical Society on the occasion of the Bradford Bi-centenary. Enough that I remind you that William Bradford, "The Caxton of our Middle States," was born in Leicestershire, England, May 20, 1663; that he emigrated to this country in 1685, bringing a warm and quaint letter of testimony to the Society of Friends from George Fox; that he was the intimate friend of William Penn; that in December, 1685, he printed the first book issued in the Middle Colonies, a circumstance to which I shall presently refer; that in 1690 he, in conjunction with the Rittenhouses, built near our own beautiful Wissahickon the first paper-mill erected in America, this venerable structure being the theme of a valuable and most interesting monograph of our accomplished Vice-President, the Honorable Horatio Gates Jones; that he was the first man to maintain, as he bravely and acutely did in 1692, the freedom of the press against arbitrary power; that in 1693 he removed to the Province of New York, and, setting up his press in Manhattan Island, introduced the art of printing into that great Province; that he henceforth lived in the city of his new adoption, holding the honorable office of Printer to the Crown for the Province of New York under the reigns of William and Mary, Queen Anne, and the first two Georges; that on May 23, 1752, in his ninetieth year, he closed his long and busy and wholesome career, loved and revered by all who knew him; that his remains were interred in the historic grounds of Trinity Church; and that on May 20, 1863, the Historical Society of New York celebrated with imposing ceremonies his two hundredth birthday. And if it was meet, as it surely was, that our noble friends of New York should commemorate the two hundredth birthday of the first Printer of these Middle Colonies, it is still more meet that we of Pennsylvania should commemorate, as we do to-night, the two hundredth anniversary of the introduction of the Printing Art itself.

And now let me say a few words about the first book

printed by William Bradford. It was, strange to say, an Almanac. And yet it is not strange; for the almanac is, in a certain sense, to the days of the year what the clock is to the hours and minutes of the day. And therefore the two books most likely to be found in a Christian household are an almanac and a Bible. True, the first American almanac was printed in 1639 by Stephen Day at Cambridge, Massachusetts; but no copy of it has come down to us. The earliest Pennsylvania almanac extant was printed by William Bradford in December, 1685. Only two copies are known to exist. One of these is in the rich collection of our own Pennsylvania Historical Society, and was bought for the judicious sum of five hundred and twenty dollars. Here it is (showing the relie). It is an opusculum of twenty unpagined leaves. The title reads thus:

“Atkins. (S.) Kalendarium Pennsilvaniense, or, America's Messinger. Being an Almanack For the Year of Grace, 1686. Wherein is contained both the English & Forreign Account, the Motions of the Planets through the Signs, with the Luminaries, Conjunctions, Aspects, Eclipses; the rising, southing and setting of the Moon, with the time when she passeth by, or is with the most eminent fixed Stars: Sun rising and setting, and the time of High-Water at the City of Philadelphia, &c. With Chronologies, and many other Notes, Rules, and Tables, very fitting for every man to know & have; all which is accomodated to the Longitude of the Province of Pennsylvania, and Latitude of 40 Degr. north, with a Table of Houses for the same, which may indifferently serve New England, New York, East & West Jersey, Maryland, and most parts of Virginia. By Samuel Atkins. Student in the Mathematicks and Astrology. And the Stars in their Courses fought against Sesera, Judg. 5. 29. Printed and Sold by William Bradford, sold also by the Author and H. Murrey in Philadelphia, and Philip Richards in New York; 1685. 12mo. pp. (40).”

More interesting still is Bradford's personal “inaugural,” as follows:

“THE PRINTER TO THE READERS.

“Hereby understand that after great Charge and Trouble, I have brought that great Art and Mystery of Printing into this part of America believing it may be of great service to you in several respects, hoping to find Encouragment, not only in this Almanack, but what else I shall enter upon for the use and service of the Inhabitants of these Parts. Some Irregularities, there be in this Diary, which I desire you to pass by this year; for being lately come hither, my matereals were Misplaced, and out of order, whereupon I was forced to use Figures and Letters of various sizes, but understanding the want of something of this nature, and being importuned thereto, I ventured to make publick this, desiring you to accept thereof, and by the next, (as I find encouragement) shall endeavor to have things compleat. And for the ease of Clarks, Scrivniers, &c. I propose to print blank Bills, Bonds, Letters of Attourney, Indentures, Warrants, &c. And what else presents itself, wherein I shall be ready to serve you; and remain your Friend,

“W. BRADFORD.

“PHILADELPHIA, the 28th
10th Month, 1685.”

Such was the humble precursor of that famous and sententious series of annuals which, under the pseudonymous title of “Poor Richard’s Almanack,” was begun in this city in 1732, and continued twenty-five years, by the illustrious journeyman-printer, Benjamin Franklin. But what a colossal advance from the astrological Almanack of 1685 to the Astronomical Ephemeris of 1885! Despise not, then, the day of small things.

Let me pass to say a few words about the first newspapers printed in the American Colonies. As in the case of Almanacs, so in the case of Newspapers, Massachusetts takes the chronological lead. The first journal issued in this country was published in Boston by Benjamin Harris on September 25, 1690, under the title of “Publick Occurrences both Foreign and Domestick.” Twenty-nine years afterwards, namely, December 22, 1719, Andrew Bradford, whose career has been worthily set forth by our honored Vice-President, Senator Jones, founded in Philadelphia the

first newspaper of the Middle Colonies. A copy of the second number is in the collection of the Library Company of Philadelphia, and bears the following title :

“The American Weekly Mercury, Tuesday December 29, 1719. Philadelphia Printed, and Sold by Andrew Bradford, at the Bible in the Second Street and John Copson in the Market Street, 1719.”

In 1728, Samuel Keimer started *The Universal Instructor in all Arts and Sciences*; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, which a few months afterwards he sold for a song to Benjamin Franklin, who made it a decided success. The first daily paper issued in America was published in Philadelphia on September 21, 1784, under the title of *The American Daily Advertiser*,—a venerable sheet, which still honorably survives under the title of *The North American*.

I ought not to leave this matter of periodicals without at least adverting to our early Magazines. For, although Lord Macaulay affects to sneer at them in his brilliant paper *On the Athenian Orators*, yet George Washington had a different opinion. Writing to our own Mathew Carey, who had established, in 1787, *The American Museum*, Washington says :

“I entertain an high idea of the utility of periodical publications : insomuch that I could heartily desire copies of the *Museum* and *Magazines*, as well as common *Gazettes*, might be spread through every city, town, and village in America. I consider such easy vehicles of knowledge more happily calculated than any other to preserve the liberty, stimulate the industry, and meliorate the morals of an enlightened and free people.”

This extract, let me add, very fitly serves as the motto on the covering of *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*. It is with pride that we remember that the first two magazines issued in America came from the press of Philadelphia : the first, called *The American Magazine*,

was published by Andrew Bradford, February 13, 1741; and the second, called *The General Magazine*, was published by Benjamin Franklin three days later.

And now we come to the first publications in America of the Book of books. As early as January, 1688, our own William Bradford, while still living in Philadelphia, proposed "to the Half Year's Meeting of Friends held at Burlington," to print "a large House Bible in folio, in fair character, on good paper, and well bound with the Apocraphy, and useful marginall notes:" the subscription price being "twenty shillings per Bible," and the pay being "half Silver Money and half Country Produce at Money price." (Here is the original sheet.) The story of the discovery of this proposal is graphically told us by Mr. Wallace in his Commemorative Address.¹ But there is no evidence that Bradford attempted to carry his proposals into effect; indeed, it would have been illegal for him to attempt it: for at that time the British Government claimed the monopoly of publishing God's Word, having conferred it as a royal privilege upon the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge. In 1743, Christopher Sauer published in our own Germantown an edition of the Bible in German, it being Luther's version. It was a large quarto, in German long primer type: being the largest work that had issued from any press in the Middle Colonies, and unequalled for many years after. (Here is a copy of the first edition.) This is the first Bible printed in America in a European tongue; European, I say:

¹ "The only known copy of this sheet has a curious history. It has been used, by some early binder, Bradford himself perhaps, as the inner lining of the cover of a quarto volume. Here, about 1843, it was discovered by Mr. Nathan Kite, who succeeded in removing it almost uninjured. While he lived, Mr. Kite treasured this relic of Bradford's enterprising spirit above all his other bibliographical possessions. After his death, his widow gave it to a person whom she had employed in moving some of her furniture, in payment, I presume, for his services. Its new owner left it on exhibition in the Museum, at Independence Hall, for nine years, but finally, in 1883, sold it to the Historical Society of Pennsylvania."—*Hildeburn's "Issues of the Pennsylvania Press,"* Vol. I. pp. 9, 10.

for the translation of the Bible into the language of the aborigines of Massachusetts by John Eliot, the "Apostle to the Indians," had already been published at Cambridge as early as 1663. The first English Bible printed in America was published by Robert Aitkin, in our own city of Philadelphia, in 1782: it being one of the rich first fruits of our American Independence. It bears on its fly-leaf the following resolution, passed by the First Congress, September 12, 1782, upon the petition of the publisher and the certificate of its chaplains, Bishop William White and Reverend Doctor George Duffield, to whom it had been referred :

"Whereupon, *Resolved*, That the United States in Congress assembled highly approve the pious and laudable undertaking of Mr. Aitkin, as subservient to the interest of religion, as well as an instance of the progress of arts in this country, and being satisfied from the above report of his care and accuracy in the execution of the work, they recommend this edition of the Bible to the inhabitants of the United States, and hereby authorize him to publish this Recommendation in the manner he shall think proper."

It ought to be added that the first edition of the Douai Bible was also published in Philadelphia by Carey & Stewart in 1790.

Thus it was here, in our own Philadelphia, that the first printer in the Middle Colonies began his glorious career: it was here that the first book and the first newspaper of the Middle Colonies were printed; it was here that the first magazine in the American Colonies was issued; and it was here that the first German Bible and the first English Bible printed in the United States were published. Gentlemen of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania, is not this a record to be proud of?

Such is a very meagre sketch of the first publications, representing various kinds of literature, issued in our Middle Colonies. I cannot close this historic part of my address without adverting to a volume which has appeared most

opportunely. It is a noble quarto of three hundred and ninety-two pages, bearing the following title :

“A Century of Printing The Issues of the Press 1685–1784 By Charles R. Hildeburn Vol. 1, 1685–1763 Philadelphia MDCCCLXXXV”

To use the author's own words : “The design of this work is to present, as far as possible, full and strictly accurate descriptions of the titles, with collations, of every book, pamphlet, and broadside printed in the Province and State of Pennsylvania, during the first hundred years of the operations of the press within their limits.” And nobly has the author accomplished his purpose : for he has collected more than forty-five hundred separate titles of publications issued in Pennsylvania between 1685 and 1784. The Preface to his work is quite a model of condensed, characterizing, and suggestive statement. As a specimen of the interesting archives it enshrines, let me refer you to page 28, containing the following title of a book printed in 1693 : “An Exhortation and Caution To Friends Concerning buying and keeping of Negroes.” This “Exhortation” of the “Philadelphia Meeting of Keithian Quakers,” Mr. Hildeburn declares, was “the first protest against slavery printed in America.” Let me recall to you the interesting fact that the protest of our Germantown Friends, presented in 1688, is the basis of John G. Whittier's beautiful poem on Francis Daniel Pastorius, entitled *The Pennsylvania Pilgrim*.

Having given this very imperfect sketch of typographical beginnings in our Middle Colonies, let me now enter what I venture to think is a larger and more important field, namely, some of the results which have flowed from the significant event we are celebrating to-night. Indeed, I suspect that the real reason why you have selected me to be your orator is precisely this : I am not an antiquary, like your honored selves ; I am simply a public teacher. In other words, you wish me to survey William Bradford's historic

enterprise from a moral platform. Let me remind you of what in this connection is a significant circumstance: William Caxton, who introduced the art of printing into Great Britain about the year 1477, established his printing-office in a *religious* locality, namely, Westminster Abbey.

"Already the precincts of Westminster had sheltered the power which was to outshine the hats of cardinals, and the croziers of prelates, and to bring out into a new light all that was worthy of reservation in the Abbey itself. 'William Caxton, who first introduced into Great Britain the art of printing, exercised that art A.D. 1477, or earlier, in the Abbey of Westminster.' So speaks the epitaph, designed originally for the walls of the Abbey, now erected by the Roxburgh Club near the grave in St. Margaret's Church, which received his remains in 1491. His press was near the house which, according to tradition, he occupied in the Almonry, by the Chapel of St. Anne. This ecclesiastical origin of the first English Printing-press is perpetuated in the name of 'the Chapel,' given by printers to a congress or meeting of their body. Victor Hugo, in a famous passage of his '*Notre Dame de Paris*,' describes how 'the book killed the Church.' The connection of Caxton with the Abbey gives this thought another and a kindlier turn. 'The Church (or the Chapel) has given life to the Book.' In this sense, if in no other, Westminster Abbey has been the source of enlightenment to England beyond any other spot in the Empire."¹

It is another and splendid illustration of the truth that Christianity, in the genuine sense of this august word, has ever been the grand supporter of all real progress.

Were I asked what I thought is the greatest of human inventions, I should answer: First, the invention of the art of Writing; and, secondly, the invention of the art of Printing. Mr. Motley, the historian, refers to this invention in a passage so classic that I must indulge in the luxury of citing it:

"At the very epoch when the greatness of Burgundy was most swiftly ripening, another weapon was secretly forging,

Dean Stanley's "*Memorials of Westminster Abbey*" (pp. 458, 459).

more potent in the great struggle for freedom than any which the wit or hand of man has ever devised or wielded. When Philip the Good, in the full blaze of his power, and flushed with the triumphs of territorial aggrandizement, was instituting at Bruges the order of the Golden Fleece, 'to the glory of God, of the blessed Virgin, and of the holy Andrew, patron saint of the Burgundian family,' and enrolling the names of the kings and princes who were to be honored with its symbols, at that very moment, an obscure citizen of Harlem, one Lorenz Coster, or Lawrence the Sexton, succeeded in printing a little grammar by means of movable types. The invention of printing was accomplished, but it was not ushered in with such a blaze of glory as heralded the contemporaneous erection of the Golden Fleece. The humble setter of types did not deem emperors and princes alone worthy his companionship. His invention sent no thrill of admiration throughout Christendom; and yet, what was the good Philip of Burgundy, with his Knights of the Golden Fleece, and all their effulgent trumpery, in the eye of humanity and civilization, compared with the poor sexton and his wooden types?"¹

Of course, I do not pretend to vouch for Mr. Motley's accuracy when he ascribes the invention of printing to Lorenz Coster rather than to John Gutenberg. The question as to which was the inventor will probably never be answered in such a way as to command universal assent. This thing, however, is certain: In the list of human contrivances, next to the invention of writing, the invention of printing must be ranked as the most powerful factor in civilization. It is the invention which, to a large extent, makes possible the knowledge of all other inventions; and not only inventions, but also arts, sciences, philosophies, theologies, literatures, humanities, industries, economics, legislations, ameliorations, morals, progress; in a single word, civilization: making all these and kindred boons the world's common property. The printing-press registers, conserves, and diffuses the world's thought and feeling and

¹ Rise of the Dutch Republic, Vol. I. p. 45.

act, turning the knowledge of the present and the past into a universal and immortal heirloom. The tyrant Jehoiakim could burn up Jeremiah's prophecies so long as they existed only in the form of a single manuscript scroll. But all the tyrants of the world cannot now destroy the book of Jeremiah,—the multiplying power of the printing-press is too much for them. Moreover, it is an occasion for devout thanksgiving that the element of carbon is incapable of being affected by the atmosphere, and is insoluble in any liquid, for carbon is the chemical basis of printing-ink. The letters of the first Bible ever printed, now nearly half a millennium ago, are as black to-day as they were the day they were impressed. Types are the Manes of past millenniums.

But the printing-press is not only a preserving and diffusing force, it is also an impelling and educating force. Recall what it achieved at the very outset. From the conquest of Alexandria by the Saracens at the beginning of the seventh century, when the Egyptian papyrus almost ceased to be imported into Europe, to the close of the tenth century, about which time the art of making paper from cotton rags seems to have been introduced, there were no writing materials except parchment,—a substitute too costly for popular use. In 1274 the price of an English manuscript Bible was fifty marks, or thirty-three pounds; that is, say, one hundred and sixty-five dollars. Reckoning the value of money in that age to be twenty times its present value, that Bible must have been worth, say, six hundred and sixty pounds, or three thousand three hundred dollars.¹ This costliness of parchment compelled our mediæval ancestors to cultivate a singular economy of words. For example: "In the tower of London," says Sismondi, "we may see in the Rolls of Fines that each contract for sales of lands is always comprised in a single line; and from the eighth century to the tenth the annals of the Franks, written in the convents, followed the same rule. Whatever the number or the importance of

¹ Words, Facts, and Phrases, page 444.

events, these annalists were forbidden to exceed the one line for each year. The excessive price of parchments for manuscript compelled the writers of that period to cover the margins of ancient books with their contracts, and they often erased the most sublime works of Greece or Rome for the purpose of substituting some private agreement or some legendary absurdity.”¹

Now, this scarcity of books produced a state of ignorance almost incredible. Hallam’s chapter on the state of Europe during the Middle Ages is a melancholy picture of an ignorance as general as it was profound. But with the invention of printing, and the consequent multiplication of books and their reduction in price, burst forth a wonderful quickening of intellect. Men suddenly turned to letters, and thence to progress. From that time the printing-press has been the special and sensitive organ of that majestic thing, Public Opinion; the sublime instrument of that limitless possibility, Human Progress. Accordingly, the “myriad-minded” bard of Avon, exercising his marvellous power of divination with a subtlety so characteristically keen as to make his slight anachronism pardonable, represents Jack Cade, the ignorant rebel against Henry VI., as saying to the accomplished courtier, Lord Say,—

“Thou hast most traitorously corrupted the youth of the realm, in erecting a grammar-school; and whereas, before, our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally, thou hast caused printing to be used; and, contrary to the king, his crown, and dignity, thou hast built a paper-mill. It will be proved to thy face, that thou hast men about thee, that usually talk of a noun, and a verb, and such abominable words, as no Christian ear can endure to hear. Thou hast appointed justices of peace, to call poor men before them about matters they were not able to answer. Moreover, thou hast put them in prison; and because they could not read, thou hast hang’d them: when, indeed, only for that cause, they have been most worthy to live.”²

¹ History of the Italian Republic.

² Henry VI., Part II., Act IV., sc. 7.

And the ignorant insurgent was right. The printing-press it is which, in an eminent sense, is, or at least ought to be, and can be, and largely has been, and still is, the educating, shaping, uplifting force of society. Friends, I love my calling. I honestly believe that the ministerial vocation is a divine appointment, and that, so long as the present economy lasts, it is absolutely indispensable to the welfare of society. Nevertheless, I must admit, and I cheerfully do admit, that there is a preacher who exercises a vaster influence than the preacher in the pulpit; it is the preacher in the press-room. The man who writes a true book—a book which is loyal to God and to men—is a preacher whose voice transcends the limits of church walls and Sundays. Like the oratory of the firmament, “there is no speech nor language where his voice is not heard: his line is gone out through all the earth, and his words to the end of the world.” Authorship is in an eminent sense a bishopric. Alas, how many bishops profane their solemn office!

While what I have said concerning the influence of publications is true of books, it is especially true of newspapers. Allow me, then, to say a few words touching journalism. And the topic is most important. Were I asked what I thought is the most influential factor in our American life, I would unhesitatingly answer, the newspaper-press. You may say that the mother is more influential; but the mother dies. You may say that the school is more influential; but the school is only for our boy-days. You may say that the church is more influential; but, alas, the church, practically speaking, reaches only a part of the community. But the newspaper is perennial and ubiquitous. In this year, 1885, there are issued in the United States 11,314 periodicals, having a circulation of 31,779,686, and paying wages amounting to \$28,559,336.38. What an advance upon the year 1685, when in all these Middle Colonies of North America there was not issued a single periodical; the only publications being two pamphlets of forty pages each! Verily, the little one has become a thousand, and the small

one a strong nation. And what a power Journalism is! For the journal comes to its readers not only as a news-teller, but also as a sort of oracle. For the moment one sees a statement in a paper, it somehow takes on a dignity and importance which it might not have possessed had he only heard it from the lips. Thus the newspaper not only reflects public sentiment, it also largely shapes it. It makes a man or it unmakes him by the motives which it assigns to him. It often outlines the plans of individuals, the methods of institutions, the policies of corporations, the polity of a nation. Edmund Burke once said, "There are three Estates in Parliament; but, in the Reporters' Gallery yonder, there sits a Fourth Estate more important than the other three." What Cincinnatus was to Rome, what the first Napoleon was to France, that the Newspaper is to America: it is America's Dictator. The Journal is Columbia's natural Censor; I wish it were always as just as Cato of Rome.

Thank God, many are the editors who are true to their great vocation. They are brave to denounce wrong-doing in conspicuous places; swift to recognize merit in public life; chivalric to defend the oppressed and set right the misunderstood; strong to cheer those who are burdened with great responsibilities; wise to guide the perplexed; skilful to build up society: in brief, like the apostle Paul, exercising their authority for building up and not for casting down. Alas, I cannot say this for all editors. Gentlemen of the Press, the warmth of my tribute to you justifies me in speaking plainly. There is too much of catering to morbid tastes; too much intrusion into the privacy of home-life; too much indulgence in personalities; too much publicity to mere rumors; too much detailed accounts of crimes and brutalities and scandals; in brief, too much news that is not news, and which, if it were news, had better never have become news. "Ah," you tell me, "the people demand this kind of reading." Alas, what you say is too true. But, Gentlemen of the Press, it is your glorious vocation to marshal the people, not to follow them; to lift them up,

not to kneel to them. If you must have a scandal column, label it at the top with the words: "Beware of deadly poison."¹

Such is the tremendous power of the journal, such the awful responsibility of the newspaper. The press is the tongue multiplied a myriad-fold, speaking through a trumpet which may be heard around the world. The press immortalizes statements whether true or false. Spoken words are evanescent, dying away with the receding aerial vibrations. But printed words are immortal. Journalism it is which moulds that subtle, colossal thing we call Public Opinion. And when journalism soars, as it often does, to its true vocation as the upbuilder of human society; when at your breakfast-table you open your morning journal, and find it mainly devoted to what is pure and generous and noble and inspiring; or when you return from your daily toil at nightfall, and feeling weary, open your evening journal, and find that it is mostly devoted to what is mentally refreshing and morally exhilarating; then will the Press stand forth as the bright harbinger of the Millennium. God speed that day!

In view of the tremendous, and in the main beneficent results which have flowed from the invention of the Art of arts, I cannot close better than in the words of the "Song of the Printer":

¹ Benjamin Harris, the pioneer journalist of America, in issuing the prospectus of his *Publick Occurrences both Foreign and Domestick*, published September 25, 1690, quaintly announces what he conceives to be the duties of an editor. Among these duties he mentions the following:

"Thirdly, That some thing may be done towards the Curing, or at least the Charming of that Spirit of Lying, which prevails among us, wherefore nothing shall be entered, but what we have reason to believe is true, repairing to the best fountains for our Information. And when there appears any material mistake in anything that is collected, it shall be corrected in the next."

What a blessing it would be were every modern editor as conscientious as old Benjamin Harris!

"THE SONG OF THE PRINTER.

Pick and click
 Goes the type in the stick,
 As the printer stands at his case :
 His eyes glance quick, and his fingers pick
 The type at a rapid pace :
 And one by one as the letters go,
 Words are piled up steady and slow,—
 Steady and slow,
 But still they grow,
 And words of fire they soon will glow :
 Wonderful words, that without a sound
 Traverse the earth to its utmost bound ;
 Words that shall make
 The tyrant quake,
 And the fetters of the oppress'd shall break ;
 Words that can crumble an army's might,
 Or treble its strength in a righteous fight.
 Yet the types they look but leaden and dumb,
 As he puts them in place with finger and thumb ;
 But the printer smiles,
 And his work beguiles
 By chanting a song as the letters he piles,
 With pick and click,
 Like the world's chronometer, tick ! tick ! tick !

Oh, where is the man with such simple tools
 Can govern the world as I ?
 With a printing-press, an iron stick,
 And a little leaden die.
 With paper of white, and ink of black,
 I support the Right, and the Wrong attack.

Say, where is he, or who may he be,
 That can rival the printer's power ?
 To no monarch that lives the wall doth he give :
 Their sway lasts only an hour ;
 While the printer still grows, and God only knows
 When his might shall cease to tower."